

Statement from a spokesperson for Barnaby Joyce

In regard to the report on The Project by Hamish Macdonald on Thursday 18 April, 2019 the details conveyed, both in inference and fact, were reckless and may be deemed vexatious as the correct information could easily have been obtained by contacting the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

My Joyce had no role in determining either the price or the vendor, nor the classification of any purchase of a water entitlement in this area. They were done at arms length by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority in conjunction with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

By examination of precedents of the purchase of water by the previous Labor Minister, Penny Wong, using The Project's approach to the current report would infer that former Minister Wong was also possibly culpable of some nefarious purpose in the acquisition of Twynam Pastoral Company's parcel of water. This also would be totally incorrect and after numerous Senate inquiries, no such assertion as to the legality of Penny Wong's role has ever been made. This information is also easily obtainable from the Department and the Hansard record.

The department has confirmed that Mr Joyce had no contact with Mr Taylor and this also could have been discovered if Mr Macdonald had inquired the same from the department. The purchase of EAA water was first mooted by the Queensland Government in 2015.

By reason of what may be deemed as a defamatory inference, that Mr Joyce was motivated and capable of an ulterior purpose in his role as a Minister, he is currently in discussions with solicitors about this matter.

Mr Joyce requests that The Project corrects the record at the first available opportunity on the same platform on which the initial allegations were made.